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one that proposes to fight not only its own battles but also those of all ancient neglected worthies.

THE THING TO OBSERVE is that we are slipping rapidly away from the time when a few persons or a few places represented the concentration of botanical authority, and are upon the threshold of a new order of things in which the voice of authority is to come from "the people." There may not be greater rivalry in feeling, but there will be far more successful rivalry; and the botanical landscape will represent a uniform forest rather than a cluster of sequoias towering in the midst of their lowly neighbors. Everything wrought out will have to run the gauntlet of the many instead of the few.

THIS CONDITION of things has been brought about by the wonderful spread of scientific training and the consequent development of independent thinking. In a general sense this is a far more desirable state of affairs, for it develops hundreds of efficient workers where there was only one before. It also has certain disadvantages common to all democracy. While it brings individual freedom it permits follies which a strong central power would have repressed. The new order of things, therefore, must be expected to be more of a "lo here" and "lo there" state of affairs, full of "fads" and erratic movements, and abounding more in worthless than worthy literature, but there is in it more of hope and promise for the rapid development of botanical science than under the former régime, for an aristocracy is always inclined to be ultra-conservative. It is only rebels who are apt to be extremists, and when there is nothing left to rebel against they usually settle down into staid and comfortable citizens.

OPEN LETTERS.

The pollination of *Orchis spectabilis*.

In the spring of 1891 while examining *Orchis spectabilis*, I was surprised to see the pollen masses, which I had withdrawn on the point of my pencil, turning backward, instead of downward, as one would expect from the position of the stigma below the anthers. When I pushed the pencil point into another flower the pollen masses were quite out of position to fertilize the pistil. Yet this flower is said to set seed abundantly. Can any of the readers of the GAZETTE throw light upon the matter?—JANE H. NEWELL, *Cambridge, Mass.*